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on a system already proved beneficial. I refer to the building and loan associations which are enjoying such a vogue at present. Just what has brought about this revival of interest in these institutions it would be interesting to inquire; but without going into that, one can easily see the influence they exert over the habits and relations of working people.

A significant fact, perhaps not far removed from the distrust of corporations noted in the letter above referred to, is that these associations, in many instances, are made up, from their presiding officer to the last member registered, of working people. Much, I think, may be expected from the experience in conducting business enterprises which will in these societies be gained by men whose opportunities have naturally been limited. This is a good school in which to take lessons in the property-rights of the citizen and in commercial usages. These societies hold weekly meetings for receiving the payments of their members, and this union for a common purpose, the feeling of responsibility for the success of the enterprise, and the prospect of becoming a householder, are powerful levers to hold the members up to their work.

While societies of this kind prove so attractive to people of small incomes, and accomplish so much in improving their condition and adding to the number of homeowners, they will do much to increase that body of conservative, law-abiding citizens, which is the best fruit and the hope of a republic.

CHARLES B. GILLETTE.

IV.

WANTED—A TEST FOR PAUPERISM.

HUMAN nature is very much the same the world over, even down to those parasites upon society, the paupers. In France, as in England and in America, the question, What constitutes pauperism? seems to be equally difficult of solution, and to present precisely the same difficulties in every case. The labor test was recently applied in France, with results unusually significant.

It is Pastor Theodore Monod who tells the story. The experiment was tried by an acquaintance of his, a gentleman of means and of wide business connections. He entered into an understanding with various head of business houses, manufacturers and others, by which they agreed to furnish three consecutive days employment at four francs a day, to any man who came to them with a letter from him. Four francs a day, being the highest price paid in Paris for unskilled labor, is, as Mr. Monod observes, "life assured, with dignity."

The student of this problem of pauperism then turned his attention to the street beggars. In eight months' time he was accosted by 727 sturdy beggars, every one of whom urged want of work as the cause of their mendicity. To each applicant the offer was made of a letter which would insure him work; he had but to present himself at a certain place at a certain hour to receive it, and to procure employment at four francs a day. More than half the number, 415, did not even apply for the letter. Of the remaining 312, 138 took the letter but did not present it, 156 received the letter, obtained employment, worked half a day, demanded their two francs, and departed to be seen no more. *Eighteen* out of the whole number, or a fraction less than one in forty, were still at work at the end of the three days. The conclusion was inevitable, after a trial extending over a long period and including hundreds of individuals, that in Paris, at least, not more than two and a half per cent. of able-bodied men who ask for alms are worthy of a moment's consideration.

This being measurably true in all large cities, the question arises, how are we

to discern the worthy poor, whom the last necessity has driven to appeal to public charity, and who therefore need, and should have, immediate relief? Mr. Robert Treat Paine, whose life and fortune have been given to the study and practice of the best methods of charity, calls this the question of the hour: "To evolve a law or test by which the worthy and needy poor may be distinguished from the willing pauper," the pauper by profession. Perhaps the surest test would be by elimination; starving the pauper out. But such a test, besides being cruel to those who do not deserve starvation, can never be depended on so long as free lunch counters exist, and indolent self-indulgence chooses to bring immunity from the pain of sympathy at the price of a glass of beer. Some other method than starvation must therefore be sought. May it be found speedily.

LOUISE SEYMOUR HOUGHTON.

V.

THOSE QUEER WORDS.

In your June number, "Notes and Comments," Mr. E. M. Day, on the word "brottus," says its use was limited to the city of Savannah. This is a mistake. I remember well the word was in common use in Charleston and all the low country of South Carolina. I always entertained the opinion that it was a corruption of "gratis," conveying as it does the same meaning.

Mr. D. also mentions the words "buccra" and "goober" as of unknown etymology. I suggest "buccra" is from the Spanish "vaquero," a cowherder, and by the common people pronounced "buck-a-ro." "Goober" is probably from the Italian "gobba," a hunchback, and applied to the ground nut from its peculiar shape.

There is no obscure word that I ever heard of which survived from African sources.

S. HEYDENFELDT.

VI.

A GOOD PLACE TO BEGIN REFORM.

EITHER the veto power is a kingly prerogative, such as ought not to exist in a republic like ours, or else it is grossly misunderstood and criminally abused. There have been presidents, governors and mayors who have used it as if they supposed their personal interests and preferences to be the highest consideration in all legislation. Again, it has been used as an important factor in political plots, like Buchanan's veto of the Homestead bill; and, again, some executives have conceived the idea, in apparent innocence, that they ought to veto all measures for which they would not have voted had they been members of the legislative body. There have been few presidents and governors that have not been quick to resent anything that looked like an encroachment of the legislative upon the executive domain; yet great numbers of vetoes are essentially encroachments upon the province of the legislature, which cannot be resented unless the majority in favor of the vetoed measure happens to be two-thirds. It seems never to occur to the minority that in welcoming the assistance of an arbitrary power, arbitrarily used, they are lowering their own dignity and abrogating their own rights, collectively, as representatives of the people, and that it would be infinitely better, in case of an improper veto, for them to sacrifice their immediate advantage by voting with the majority to make the necessary two-thirds. There are circumstances in which one should "stand by his order." The only proper occasion for a veto is when the